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ABSTRACT

The guide provides a brief introduction to the culture and language of Japan, and is designed for visitors, students, and business travelers. It offers practical information on various aspects of daily living, including: money; banks; food; restaurants; hotels; tipping; postal and telecommunications services; transportation; shopping; health and medical care; electricity; measurement conversions; bowing; handshaking; privacy and personal contact; politeness; shoes; gift-giving; expressing thanks; invitations; eating and drinking; tea; houses; bathing; dress; expressing feelings; and festivals. Suggestions for appropriate behavior and expectations are offered. It also includes basic information about Japan: a historical sketch; a map; facts about geography and people; government; economy; education; religion; and art. A brief bibliography lists additional books about Japan. (MSE)

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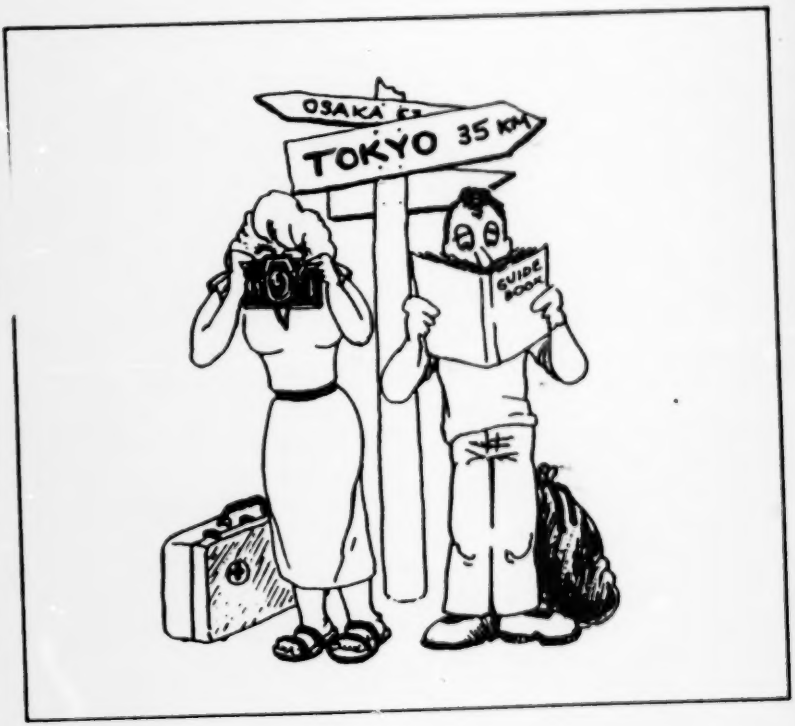

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COUNTRY SUPPLEMENT: Living in Japan

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FIRST STEPS

Congratulations! You are about to embark on an adventure--living in another country. Your destination is Japan. When you arrive, you will need to be able to satisfy some immediate survival needs. Often you will find that you must do things differently from how you do them at home. This section is designed to help you get started learning how to live in Japan. Although every town will be a little different, we can provide you with basic facts about life in Japan. Filling in the details will be up to you. So, for instance, while we can tell you about restaurants and eating habits in Japan, you will need to find places to eat which have food you like and can afford. And while we can tell you about different means of transportation existing in Japan, you will still need to find the best way to get around the town where you live. We can suggest alternatives, but you will be making the final choices.

One final note: You may find that cultural changes, technological advances and regional differences affect customs, values, systems and even the "country facts" as reported in this booklet. So "expect the unexpected" and be prepared to learn as well from your own direct experience. The information in this section and those which follow should be used only as an initial guide. **Gambatte!**

This section covers the topics listed below. Read the ones of most interest to you now, then read the others as the need arises.

1. Money
2. Food
3. Restaurants
4. Hotels

5. Telephone
6. Transportation
7. Letters and Telegrams
8. Shopping
9. Health and Medical Care
10. Electricity
11. Tipping
12. Conversions

1. MONEY

Yen, written ¥, is the name for the monetary unit used in Japan. Its value changes according to the world money market. If you want to know its value prior to departure for Japan, you can check with an international bank for the current exchange rate.

Japanese **yen** come in the following denominations: 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 **yen** coins, and 500, 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 **yen** banknotes.

Banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

The safest way to carry money is in the form of traveler's checks. You can obtain them in Japanese **yen** at branches of the Bank of Tokyo or the Bank of Fuji in your home country, or take checks in your own currency to exchange when you arrive in Japan.

2. FOOD

Japan has a wide variety of delicious foods. They can be divided into three main types: Japanese, Oriental and Western. The Oriental cuisines are from China, Indonesia and Korea (among other

nations), and there are many excellent restaurants specializing in them in Tokyo and other major cities. Western food is also served in hotels and restaurants in large Japanese cities; however, the cuisine differs somewhat from that actually served in Western countries.

The basis of a Japanese diet is rice, which is usually boiled and eaten with side dishes such as pickles, fish, vegetables and/or soup. Seafood is common, while meat is more rare. Fish is eaten dried, raw, boiled, broiled, pickled, salted and fried. It is sometimes served with the head still attached. Various foods from the sea which may be new to you include: **unagi** (eel), **suppon** (snapping turtle), **fugu** (globe fish), and **kujira** (whale).

One of the most popular Japanese dishes is that of raw fish. It comes in two basic forms: **sashimi** and **sushi**. **Sashimi** is sliced raw fish served with shredded radish and seaweed. It is dipped in **tamari** (soy sauce) and **wasabi** (a spicy Japanese horseradish paste) when eaten. **Sashimi** does not constitute a meal in itself, rather it is served as an hors d'oeuvre or as a first course for a meal. **Sushi** is considered a complete meal. One variety consists of sliced fish served on two balls of vinegared rice with a dab of **wasabi**.

In addition to fish, various combinations of vegetables are common, and certain kinds are pickled.

Poultry and game are also eaten in Japan. A common form is **yakitori** (grilled poultry). It is regarded by many to be a snack food which accompanies cocktails, but it is possible to have a full meal in a **yakitori** shop. Chicken, quail and duck are typical types of poultry and game to be found in these shops.

In addition to rice, **soba** and **udon** noodles are also very common in Japan. **Udon** is made from wheat and is usually served hot. There are two types of **soba**: Japanese and Chinese. Japanese noodles are made from buckwheat and may be eaten cold or hot, depending on the season of the year. Chinese noodles come in many different varieties.

Another type of food common in Japan is **tofu** (soybean curd). It is served with fish and vegetables accompanied by rice or noodles. In addition, **miso shiru** (soup made from soybean paste) is traditionally served for breakfast with vegetables and/or **tofu**, raw eggs, pickles and tea.

Most Japanese dishes are mild since spices are rarely used. Food is usually served separately in small dishes so that each flavor may remain separate. A lot of attention is paid to the appearance of what is being served. Colored serving dishes as well as varying shapes and colors of the food items themselves are therefore common. There are a number of special traditions associated with eating; these are described in section 9 on Eating and Drinking in CUSTOMS AND VALUES.

A few well-known dishes are described below to help you order if you go out to eat in Japan:

Sukiyaki: Thinly sliced beef cooked with vegetables and tofu.

Tempura: Fish, prawns and vegetables dipped in an egg-and-flour batter and then deep-fried.

Nimono: Vegetables and dried food products boiled in a broth made from dried bonito flakes.

Mizutaki: Chicken and vegetables cooked in a broth made from seaweed and dried bonito.

Mushimono: Steamed eggs, fish, shellfish and vegetables.

3. RESTAURANTS

You will be able to find places to eat open at almost any time of day in Japan. They generally open at around 11:00 a.m. and close at around 10:00 or 11:00 at night. They range in price from the more expensive ones, where you will have to take off your shoes and eat sitting on straw mats, to the smaller, less expensive ones. Inexpensive restaurants exist everywhere and have show windows displaying wax or plastic models of the foods they serve. The prices are also clearly marked on each dish. You can also find restaurants specializing in particular Japanese foods, such as a **sushi** bar or a **sukiyaki** house.

A few things you might want to know about Japanese restaurants are described here:

Restaurants in Japan often have set menus for lunch which are less expensive than à la carte dishes or dinners, and are often served more quickly as well. A service charge of 10 percent is automatically added to your bill. There is also a tax of 10 percent levied on meals costing more than ¥2,000.

Japanese green tea is usually served with your meal. Water is not served but is available on request. Bread and butter are not served with the typical Japanese meal and are usually available only in restaurants serving Western foods.

4. HOTELS

There are several different kinds of accommodations available in Japan. If you are more comfortable

with Western-style housing, then you will want to stay in a hotel. Since Japan is popular with tourists, many European-style hotels have been built in larger cities.

If you would like to live Japanese-style, a **ryokan** (Japanese inn) is pleasant and reasonably priced. They are traditional in style, with translucent paper windows, sliding doors, straw mat-covered floors, alcoves in which you will find beautifully arranged flowers, porcelain and hanging scrolls. The building will usually be of wood, stucco and tile, surrounded by beautifully maintained gardens. When you arrive you will be asked to remove your shoes and be provided with slippers to wear when walking around the building. Slippers are to be removed, however, before you enter your room. There you will be served tea and small cakes, and be provided with an **oshibori** (hot, perfumed towel) with which you may refresh yourself.

Other important traditions to know about if you are going to stay in a **ryokan** include: Separate slippers are provided in the toilet and are worn only there. You will be assigned a maid who will bring your meals, lay out your mattress pads at night, do laundry and other errands for you. No tipping is the basic custom, but you may leave her an additional 5 percent or a small gift. Upon arrival you will be encouraged to take a bath, as this is the custom. Usually non-Japanese visitors will be given their own private bathing room, as they are known to be modest. The tubs are usually tile and are sunken below floor level. You are supposed to soap and rinse yourself outside of the tub and then get into the hot water to soak.

Japanese inns typically provide breakfast and dinner prepared in traditional Japanese cuisine. Western food is available if requested, and it is also possible to obtain lodging without meals if you prefer.

Another option is for you to stay with a Japanese family. The Japan **Minshuku** Association is responsible for setting up such arrangements. They charge a set fee which includes breakfast and dinner. You will usually have your own room and share your meals with the family. You are expected to spread out your bedding yourself at night, to bring your own soap and towels, and to tidy your room in the morning. If you decide to stay in a **minshuku**, you will need to reserve in advance through an association reservation center. Contact the Japan Minshuku Association, 201, New Pearl Building; 2-10-8, Hyakunin-cho; Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo for more information.

Kokumin shukusha are public lodgings located in scenic areas. Their rates include two meals plus a 10 percent service charge. Reservations can be made through the Japan Travel Bureau.

5. TELEPHONE

There are four kinds of phones in Japan which differ from one another in size and color as well as in function.

Red phones are located in public places. You can use them to make local calls by inserting ¥10 coins. The phone can take up to six ¥10 coins for longer calls. If you want to continue a call, add coins when you hear the warning signal. The call will be cut off 30 seconds after the warning if you do not add more money. If you have inserted more coins than you actually need for your call, they will be returned to you after you hang up.

Blue phones are located in phone booths in the street. They will take up to ten ¥10 coins.

Green phones are for telephone credit cards and sometimes also accept coins.

Yellow phones are used for intercity calls. They will take up to nine ¥100 coins in addition to ten ¥10 coins. The extra ¥100 coins will not, however, be returned to you after you hang up, so be sure not to put in too many, and to use ¥10 coins until you actually reach the person you are calling.

To make international calls you must contact **Kokusai Denshin Denwa Co. (KDD):**

(03) 211-4211 for all Asian countries except Hong Kong

(03) 211-5511 for the United States, Europe, Hong Kong and the rest of the world.

In Tokyo dial 0051 for all overseas calls. The **KDD** Information Center in Tokyo is (03) 270-5111. When making international calls, the waiting period may last a long time, even 10 minutes or more. Do not hang up during this time.

6. TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is efficient and safe in Japan. It is also very crowded. Train and subway stop signs usually are accompanied by English transliterations so they are easier to use than the bus system. Many bus routes are very circuitous, and the signs are not usually transliterated, so it is difficult for foreigners to know when they have reached their destination.

When you use the subway, your ticket will be punched at the entrance gate. Keep it because you will have to surrender it at your destination. Trains usually run every 3-5 minutes, and you can see where to get off by looking at the transliterated sign boards at each stop. In addition, your stop will usually include a list of the stations on the

line, so you can see which stations precede your destination. If you miss your stop, get off at the next one and ride back on a train in the opposite direction. During commuting hours (7:30-9:00 a.m. and 4:30-6:00 p.m.), the subways are filled beyond capacity. Special staff work during these times to help people get on and off the trains as fast as possible. Keep your arms close to your body and hold on tightly to your purse. Do not travel with children during these times.

Taxis exist in all Japanese towns. There is a basic minimum charge for two kilometers and then an additional charge for every 405 meters, plus a time charge for moving through heavy traffic. After 11:00 p.m., the rate increases by 20%. In addition, many drivers will not stop for you unless you hold up 2 or 3 fingers to indicate that you will pay two or three times the fare, in addition to the 20%! Taxis can be flagged down in the street, or found in lines at hotels and train stations. They are hard to find when it rains and on paydays. Taxi drivers prefer groups of Japanese to foreigners. A red sign in front of the passenger seat indicates when they are occupied. Enter and leave the vehicle from the left side of the car. Do not try to open the door yourself; doors are controlled by the drivers. Often drivers do not know various locations, so you need to be prepared to direct them to your destination if you can. Since many drivers do not speak English, it is useful to have your destination address and phone number, as well as the address and phone for the place where you are leaving from, written out for you. If the driver gets lost, you can indicate that s/he should call the destination for directions. You do not need to tip your taxi driver unless s/he spends a long time taking you somewhere, or has to carry a lot of luggage.

Japanese railways connect most cities. There are a number of discount systems for the national

railways which you should become aware of if you are planning to travel by train. One is the round-trip option which gives you a 10% discount when you buy a round-trip ticket. The advantages of this ticket are: It is valid for one month. It can be bought 14 days before you are planning to travel. You can sit in either first or second class. You can get the same 10% discount on any sightseeing bus in the major cities where you are traveling. It includes accident insurance, and a lodging coupon will be provided upon request. Conditions on its use are: You must visit at least two of the locations designated on the ticket and return to the starting place. You must cover at least 101 kilometers of travel on the national railways. You must use a continuous route.

7. LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS

Overseas telegrams are sent through **Kokusai Denshin Denwa Co. (KDD)** or at post offices and major hotels. There is a seven-word minimum. Urgent telegrams are double the usual rate, while lettergrams are half the normal cost.

Domestic telegrams are sent through **Nippon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT)**.

You can buy stamps for mailing letters at hotels, post offices and small shops which display a red-and-white double-capped 〒 sign. Japanese envelopes need extra glue; it is provided at all post offices. Use the red mailboxes for ordinary mail and the blue ones for express or special delivery mail. In Tokyo there are two slots on the red boxes: the righthand one is for mail for Tokyo and the lefthand slot is for mail going everywhere else. Mail in Tokyo is very slow, so if you are in a hurry, you should use **sokutatsu** (express mail).

Airmail to the United States and Europe takes about six days unless it gets delayed in Tokyo; then it can take up to nine days. Seamail takes six to eight weeks.

8. SHOPPING

Large stores are open in Japan from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Smaller ones often stay open as late as 10:00 p.m. Department stores close one day a week but not on the same day. All stores are open on Sunday.

Japanese department stores can contain everything under one roof--consumer products of all types, theaters, barber and beauty shops, a clinic, restaurants, amusement rides, and free public performances. Sometimes amusement rides and performances are held on the roof itself! Language assistance, wrapping and mailing services, and tax-free counters are additional services found in department stores. Some of the major ones are: **Matsuya**, **Mitsukoshi**, **Matsuzakaya**, **Isetan**, **Shirokiya**, and **Takashimaya**.

Be sure to take along your Customs form "Record of Purchases of Commodities Tax Exempt for Export" (which you should obtain on entering the country) whenever you go out to make large purchases. If these purchases are not officially recorded on the form, you will have to pay taxes on them when you leave, and this can be quite expensive.

Salespeople in Japan are polite, courteous, and very interested in selling their wares. They will not hurry you, however; shopping is something which should be done at leisure. All packages will be wrapped slowly and carefully, regardless of their size. You may find it useful to take a shopping bag or basket with you to carry your purchases in.

The best cities for shopping are Tokyo and Kyoto. Kyoto is known for traditional handcrafts; Tokyo has everything. **Ginza** is the main shopping district in Tokyo. In addition, **Shibuya**, **Asakusa** and **Yoyogi** are popular.

9. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

Health standards in Japan may be different from what you are used to. For example, there are open drains, and water does not have flouride in it. People are careful not to spread disease and may be seen wearing surgical masks when they are sick so as not to transmit their illness to others.

Japanese hospitals use only their own doctors, so you cannot be admitted to one and bring your own physician. Many hospitals do not like to take patients who don't speak Japanese, so it is important to find out where you can go in your community if you need medical help. The **International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers** (IAMAT) will provide you with a list of English-speaking doctors and their addresses in Japan. Write to IAMAT at the following address: 736 Center Street, Lewiston, New York 14092; telephone: (716) 754-4883.

Smog in Tokyo may cause difficulty for you, particularly if you have a history of breathing problems. Tap water is safe to drink but well water is not. Commercial milk products are also safe. In smaller towns you should be careful with unpeeled fruit, uncooked vegetables and ice cream. This is also true of raw fish.

Japanese toilets are different from raised Western-style toilets. While the latter are becoming more common, you should be prepared for using Japanese ones also. Usually they consist of a rectangular opening on a raised floor. They may or

may not be made of white porcelain, and they may or may not have plumbing. To use one you must squat with your feet on either side of the opening, facing the hooded end of the toilet bowl. You will want to carry your own supply of toilet paper (**chirigami**) with you since it is not always supplied in public toilets.

In public restrooms the doors of the individual stalls are usually shut. To check if one is occupied, knock twice on the door. If someone is inside, you will hear two knocks in response. If not, you are free to enter. Remember to knock twice if you are in a stall and someone knocks on the outside! In many small restaurants in Japan there is only one restroom, so if you are a woman, you should not be surprised if you have to walk past the men's urinals to get to the toilet stalls.

10. ELECTRICITY

Electricity is 100 to 110 volts A.C. in Japan, with varying cycles depending upon where you are. The eastern half of the country uses 50 cycles, while the western half use 60 cycles. If your electrical equipment is 220 volts, you will need to get a transformer. Most American-made equipment will operate in both regions; certain delicate instruments such as record players may need to be adjusted for use in the 50-cycle region.

11. TIPPING

The habit of handing money directly to someone to indicate your appreciation for their services goes against the Japanese sense of delicacy in money matters. When a Japanese person rewards another with money, it is usually placed in an envelope and left tastefully on a tray or included in a package

containing some other gift. In most daily transactions, tipping does not occur. The service charge on hotel and restaurant bills in general takes the place of tipping. Since some Japanese would feel as if they were being treated as beggars if you tip them, it is wiser not to do so. Small gifts, however, are greatly appreciated and even expected in certain circumstances (see Gift-Giving in CUSTOMS AND VALUES). Also, remember that **domo arigato** (thank you) is always appropriate.

12. CONVERSIONS

In Japan measurements differ from those used in the United States. The following charts are provided to help you make the necessary conversions if you are not already familiar with the metric system.

Weights and Measures

Metric		U.S.	
1	gram (g)	0.035	ounce
454	grams	1	pound
1	kilogram ("kilo")	2.2	pounds
1	centimeter (cm)	0.3937	inch
2.54	centimeters	1	inch
1	meter (m)	3.280	feet
1609.3	meters	1	mile

Liquid Measure

1	liter (l)	2.113	pints
1	liter	1.056	quarts
3.785	liter	1	gallon

Dry Measure

1	liter	0.908	quart
1	dekaliter (10 l)	1.135	pecks
1	hectoliter (100 l)	2.837	bushels

Kitchen Equivalents

U.S.	Metric
1 cup sugar	200 gr.
1 cup flour	150 gr.
1 tsp.	5 gr.
1 tbsp.	12 gr.

Kilometers and Miles

1 km	0.6 mile
3	1.8
5	3.1
8	4.9
10	6.2
15	9.3
20	12.4
25	15.5
35	21.7
50	31.0
100	62.1
200	124.2
300	186.4
500	310.6

Thermometer Readings*

38 C	100.4 F
35	95
30	86
25	77
21	69.8
10	50
5	41
0	32
-5	23
-10	14
-15	5
-17	1.4
-25	-13
-30	-22

*Japanese thermometers use the centigrade scale. To convert Fahrenheit to centigrade, subtract 32, then multiply by 5 and divide by 9. To convert centigrade to Fahrenheit, multiply by 9, divide by 5 and add 32. The chart above gives an approximate conversion.

Notes

CUSTOMS AND VALUES

Now that you have a handle on basic facts about where to find what you need and how to get it, you will want to begin looking more closely at how people live in Japan. Since the Japanese are to be your new friends and family, it is important to understand about their customs and values so that you can fit into their world successfully. The topics covered in this section have been chosen to help you begin your study of Japanese customs and values. Again, it will be up to you to learn the specifics about the people with whom you live and interact. The information we give you here is only a place for you to start. This is the beginning of your cultural exploration; it will be up to you to complete it.

The following topics are covered in this section:

1. Bowing
2. Handshaking
3. Privacy and Physical Contact
4. Politeness
5. Shoes
6. Gift-Giving
7. Expressing Thanks
8. Invitations
9. Eating and Drinking
10. Tea
11. Houses
12. Bathing
13. Dress
14. Expressing Feelings
15. Festivals

1. BOWING

The traditional way to greet someone in Japan is to bow. Bowing is also the way to pay respect, say thank you, apologize, ask favors and say goodbye, so it is a good custom to learn. The Japanese bow is deep, starting from the waist and moving down to bring the upper torso horizontal to the floor. Women bow by sliding their hands down the thighs at the same time. The depth of the bow and the number of times it is repeated indicates the nature of the relationship between the two people involved. The deeper and more frequent the bow, the more the respect being shown. A good rule of thumb is to try to bow as low as the person who is bowing to you, and to maintain the bow for as long.

2. HANDSHAKING

While the traditional greeting is to bow, handshaking is recognized as a Western tradition for greeting someone and is respected as such. So if you try to shake hands, your Japanese companion will respond, but this is only as a courtesy to you and not something that they would usually do.

3. PRIVACY AND PERSONAL CONTACT

Since many people are housed in very small living areas in Japan, privacy by means of having separate physical spaces is something unfamiliar to them. The walls of traditional houses are made of paper and hence do not shut out sounds from neighboring rooms. For this reason, people always talk and laugh quietly so as to disturb others nearby as little as possible. Doors and windows do not have locks, and people may not knock on closed doors before entering a room. The same room is often

used for living purposes during the day and sleeping purposes at night.

Physical contact between sexes is never seen in public. Even though you may see younger Japanese expressing such affection to one another, it will be perceived as impolite if you engage in such displays.

4. POLITENESS

The Japanese sense of politeness is very important, and this is what enables many people to live together in harmony with very little physical space of their own. Tradition calls for strict subservience to rank and age. It is very important to let older and/or more experienced people speak first when you are with them in a group, and to let them lead the way in what you are doing. There are also many special polite language forms to be used with people of particular status in the culture. Try to learn as many of these as you can so you can show your respect appropriately as much as possible during your stay in Japan.

Certain gestures are inappropriate in particular settings in Japan. You should never yawn in a formal situation. It is also not polite to chew gum in public, nor to use a toothpick without covering your mouth with your hand.

When sitting in chairs, you should keep your back erect with both feet on the floor, or with one leg crossed over the other at the knee or ankle. When sitting on the floor, both men and women tuck their feet underneath themselves if the situation is formal. For informal occasions, men may sit cross-legged and women with their feet placed to either side.

5. SHOES

You should never wear shoes in Japanese houses, **ryokan** (see Hotels in FIRST STEPS), or temples and shrines. When you remove your shoes, arrange them neatly with the toes pointing towards the outside. In Japanese homes and **ryokan**, slippers are provided for you to put on at the door, but they too must be removed before walking on **tatami** (straw mats). It is more polite to wear socks or stockings on **tatami** floors than to go barefoot. When you leave the building, be sure to return the slippers to where you found them and arrange them neatly.

When using a bathroom or toilet, you will be expected to use a special pair of slippers provided for that purpose outside the door of the room you are entering.

A good rule of thumb so that you don't wear the wrong shoes in a particular part of a Japanese house: Leave all rooms the same way you came in so you can return shoes needed for that space to the next user rather than wearing them as you proceed to another part of the house.

6. GIFT-GIVING

Gifts are very important in Japan. Their presentation is a sign of appreciation and respect. Whenever you are invited somewhere, you are expected to bring a gift to your host or hostess. You should offer the gift when you arrive, but be aware that tradition dictates that it not be opened until after you have left. Gifts should always be specially wrapped. Most stores in Japan provide this service.

It is customary in Japan to give a gift in return for any gift received, and that it be of similar value.

Remember this when buying gifts so you don't obligate someone to return an expensive gift to you, and so you match without exceeding the value of any gift you have received. If you give a more expensive gift in return, the receiver may feel obligated to return your favor.

7. EXPRESSING THANKS

The Japanese are very careful and punctual about saying thank you for any kindness or service. If you have been invited to a meal or afternoon tea, it is customary to telephone your host or hostess to express your thanks or to write a thank you note. This should be done as promptly as possible. It is also important to initiate the next conversation you have with the individual involved by thanking them again for the kindness shown on the previous occasion.

8. INVITATIONS

It is not common for Japanese people to invite you to their homes. Sometimes it is because they do not live nearby or it is difficult to reach their home; other times it is because they do not think that you would like to be in a Japanese home since it is not what you are used to. If you are invited home, be sure to observe the customs described above regarding shoes, gift-giving, and thanks.

When you are in someone's home, it is polite to express appreciation of what you see there as long as you are not too enthusiastic. It is appropriate to admire flower arrangements and art objects, but you should not express any surprise or particular interest in any Western-style equipment. Too much attention may be interpreted as "you are not as strange as I thought you were."

9. EATING AND DRINKING

The Japanese eat with chopsticks which they hold in their right hand. Never put them down crossed or leave them standing up in a bowl of food. When taking food from serving dishes, use the ends of the sticks which have not been in your mouth. Also, do not pass food from one set of chopsticks to another.

The Japanese usually eat from bowls which they hold at chest level or higher with their left hand while they eat with their right hand. They do not bend down to the table to reach the food. When having soup, you should lift the bowl all the way to your mouth and drink from it. When eating noodles, it is polite to slurp them as you suck them into your mouth.

There are a number of special ceremonies attached to eating a meal as the Japanese do. At the beginning of the meal, as you pick up your chopsticks, you say **Ita dakimas** (I will partake). At the end of the meal, while you are washing your chopsticks in a teacup, you say **Gochiso-sama** (It was a good feast).

When you are offered something alcoholic to drink, you should always pick up your glass or cup to receive it. It is considered very impolite to pour your own drink, so wait to be offered and then make sure you offer to fill others' glasses in return. If there is something left in your cup, drink it before holding it out for more. A polite way to avoid being offered something you don't want to drink is to place your cup or glass upside down on the table.

10. TEA

Tea was first introduced to Japan from China and has since been important in Buddhist practices as well as in daily life. **Ocha**, usually called "green tea" by Westerners, comes from the same plant as "black tea," but it is not roasted in the same way. The resulting tea is more healthy than the black tea used in most Western countries.

Ocha is the generic name for tea and you will find there are many different varieties, each with its own distinctive taste. There are also a number of teas made from other plants: **kobucha** made from seaweed, **ume kobucha** made from powdered plums, **sakura-yu** made of cherry blossoms. Tea is also the basis for a number of interesting dishes: **ocha-zuke**, made of rice base with salmon or pickled plum mixed in a crunchy topping with tea poured over it; and **matcha aisu kurimu**, green tea ice cream.

Green tea is served with all meals in Japan. There is also a special ceremony based around the drinking of tea. This originated in the past when tea was first becoming popular in Japan. While warriors, who then represented high society, enjoyed challenging one another to sip cups of tea and guess at the original blends, common people were beginning to gather together to drink tea. A priest from Nara invented a simple spiritual tea ceremony as a compromise between the two types of tea gatherings.

In the traditional tea ceremony, guests are invited formally to attend a party. The host or hostess brews the tea which, in this case, is thick, frothy, and tepid, with a slightly bitter taste. It is served in a bowl after being whisked into a foam. The art of sitting, mixing the tea, holding the utensils and the bowl, and turning it, is what is valued about the ceremony. You should therefore pay attention to what is done and how it is done. Also it is

Also it is important to appreciate the aroma of the tea as well as how it is prepared.

It is believed that when a guest fully appreciates the hospitality of his/her host in a tea ceremony, and the host recognizes it, the two will achieve a mutual understanding. This spiritual oneness is reached in silence and therefore you must remember not to speak during such a ceremony. Rather, appreciate the silence and the sound of the tea being prepared.

11. HOUSES

Many houses in Japan are built as a mixture of Japanese and Western styles. In Western-style rooms you may follow Western traditions, but in Japanese-style rooms you should observe the Japanese courtesies described elsewhere in this guide.

A traditional Japanese house consists of an entranceway with a corridor and two or more matted rooms to either side of the corridor. There is also a kitchen, a toilet, and a room for bathing. There may be no rooms specifically designated for sleeping. In this case, bedding is stored in a cupboard and brought out at bedtime. Any tables used for dining will be folded up and put away in order to make room for sleeping.

The traditional Japanese house is made of wood and paper, so it is important not to lean against walls or sliding doors which may break easily.

12. BATHING

Bathing in Japan is a time for cleansing the soul and the spirit as well as the body. The Japanese bathe daily, usually in the evening. To bathe you

must remember to soap and rinse yourself outside the tub using buckets of water. There is usually a small bench provided for this purpose. The tub is only for soaking afterwards, and it is used by more than one person, so do not pull out the plug after you have finished. It is while you are soaking that you have time to relax. You may find that the water in the tub is hotter than you are used to. In this case, there is cold water available to cool it down, but you will find that the hotter the water you use, the more relaxing your bath will be.

Traditionally the Japanese bathed in public bathhouses as well as in their homes. This tradition is slowly dying out, but it is still possible to find a **sento** (public bathhouse). There you will have everything provided for you: water, towel and soap, and even someone to scrub your back sometimes. **Sento** are almost always segregated for men and women.

13. DRESS

Western clothes are commonly worn today in Japan. Traditional styles of dress are still followed, although less frequently among younger people than among their elders. Women wear a type of cotton **kimono** called a **yukata** in the summer at home, and a type of slipper called **geta**. They wear silk **kimonos** for special occasions. The **kimono** is worn with a brocaded **obi** (a wide sash with an elaborate bow in the back). Some people need help to put on an **obi**, as it cannot be properly tied in the back by the person wearing it. Some men wear **kimonos** at home also. On special occasions, men and women also wear **zori** (shoes with two high strips of wood on the bottom) with their **kimonos**.

14. EXPRESSING FEELINGS

For the Japanese, hiding one's real feelings is considered more polite than letting them show. To express one's sorrow is thought to make the person listening sad, and this is considered rude. The Japanese also believe that if one smiles it will lessen their sorrow. Losing one's temper results in a loss of face and may cause the end of a friendship. A smile may sometimes mean embarrassment and not happiness.

The most important thing for the Japanese is to protect the feelings of the other person. Thus they may answer a question with what they think you want to hear rather than what they really feel. This attitude is one of politeness and kindness and not an evasion of the truth. Remember when you find a response to be something other than you would expect, that your companion may be responding in a way s/he thinks will keep your relationship harmonious rather than in a way which reflects what s/he really thinks or feels.

15. FESTIVALS

The Japanese have a long tradition of **matsuri** (festival celebration), and you should be sure to attend those being held during your stay in the country. Some examples are:

January 1	**New Year's Day**, a national holiday.
January 15	**Adults Day**, celebration for young people who have become 20 during the past year.
February	**Snow Festival** in Sapporo--a magnificent festival held in early February in the city which hosted the 1972 Winter Olympics.

February 4	Bean-throwing Festival (**Setsubun**) in celebration of the last day of winter according to the old lunar calendar.
March 3	Dolls Festival (**Hina Matsuri**), celebrated by mothers and other relatives for their daughters.
March 12	**Omizutori** at the **Nigatsudo Pagoda** of **Todaiji Temple** in Nara, a celebration when priests of the temple draw water from a sacred well.
April 8	**Hana Matsuri**, a festival held at all Buddhist temples in honor of Buddha's birthday.
May 15	**Aoi Matsuri**, the Hollyhock Festival held in Kyoto which includes an elegant parade.
May 16	**Black Ship Festival** in Shimoda and Shizuoka.
June 20	**Bamboo-Cutting Festival** in Kyoto.
July 7	Star Festival (**Tanabata**), a children's festival centered in Sendai.
August 15-18	**Awa Odori** dancing in Tokushima on Shikoku Island.
September 15	**Respect for the Aged Day**, a national holiday.
October 13-15	**Oeshiki**, annual Buddhist rites in honor of St. Nichiren, celebrated at Hommanji Temple in Tokyo.

November	**Momiji Festival** in Arashiyama and Kyoto, held around the time of year when the maple leaves are changing color.
November 15	**Shichigosan Festival**, a gala day for 3, 5 and 7yearolds.
December 3	**Night Festival** in Chichibu, Saitama, one of the biggest night festivals in the country.
Dec. 17-18	**Toshi-no-ichi** in Asakusa, Tokyo, year-end market held in the street going to Torigoe Shrine.

Notes

COUNTRY FACTS

As you become more comfortable living in Japan, you will find that you need to know more facts about the country; for example, how it is organized and governed. This section includes information about the following aspects:

1. History
2. Map
3. Population and Language
4. Government
5. Economy
6. Education
7. Religion
8. Art

1. HISTORY

A unified Japan existed as early as the fourth century A.D. The capital of this ancient Japanese society was in the Yamato district. In the fifth century, the Japanese officially adopted the Chinese writing system. In the sixth century, Buddhism was introduced in Japan, China and Korea. These two events were important in Japanese history, and resulted in a close affinity between China and Japan which has lasted up to the present day.

In the eighth century, the Japanese people established a system of government based on a model of the Chinese system and compiled the first official history of Japan. The capital was moved from the city of Nara in the Yamato district to Kyoto. Although emperors of the Yamato dynasty were the official rulers, Japan was really ruled by powerful **shoguns** (military governors) until 1867.

During the Middle Ages, the ideals of Japanese chivalry and **samurai** strength prevailed. Different families ruled through **shogunate** governments. Near the end of the sixteenth century, civil wars occurred throughout the country as lords from various families battled for supremacy. In 1590, General **Tokugawa Ieyasu** unified the whole of Japan under one **shogunate** and established the center of government at Edo, now known as Tokyo. In the **Tokugawa Shogunate** different regions were ruled by **daimyos**, all of whom were ultimately responsible to the central government. The culture flourished, and it was during this time that the Tea Ceremony was perfected (see Tea in CUSTOMS AND VALUES).

Japan came into contact with the West in the middle of the sixteenth century when a Portuguese ship bound for China was blown off its course and arrived in Japan. European missionaries soon followed and converted many Japanese to Christianity. The **Tokugawa Shogunate** eventually prohibited Christianity and closed the country to foreigners because it was afraid of political interference through religious indoctrination. Only a few Dutch and Chinese traders were allowed into the country, and they were confined to a small island in Nagasaki.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Japan was under pressure to open its ports to foreign traders. Within the country, the **Tokugawa Shogunate** was losing power. In 1854, a trade treaty was signed between Japan and the United States, and soon afterwards treaties with other nations were made.

In 1867 the **Tokugawa Shogunate** collapsed and the original system of government with ruling emperors was restored. The emperor who assumed power at that time was Emperor **Meiji** and the era to follow was called **Meiji** as well.

With the **Meiji** restoration, technology and civilization grew at a great rate following this change in government. Japan succeeded at establishing a modern nation with industries and modern poilitical and social institutions. New forms of culture were developed which harmonized Western culture with traditional Japanese culture, and within a short period of time Japan ranked with major Western nations in many fields.

In 1894-95, Japan fought and won the Sino-Japanese War against China over the Korean peninsula. The victory gave Japan dominant interest in Korea. In 1904-05, Japan was awarded additional rights in Korea after winning the Russo-Japanese War, and Korea was formally annexed to Japan in 1911. Japan fought in World War I in accordance with provisions of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and by the end of that conflict, Japan was recognized as a major world power.

In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria in China and set up a state of its own. She also resigned from the League of Nations. Then in 1941, with the bombing of Pearl Harbor, World War II began between Japan and the United States. Japan lost the war and, as a result, lost all of her newly acquired possessions. Manchuria was returned to China, and Korea became independent. Other smaller acquisitions were divided among the United States and Russia, although the U.S. possessions were returned to Japan in 1972.

After World War II, Japan was placed under the international control of the Allied Powers. Reforms were introduced in the country so that a democratic form of self-government was established, and in 1952 Japan was once again a sovereign state.

2. MAP

On the next page you will find a map of Japan. Locate the region where you will be living, and write in the name of the town where you will be staying if it is not already on the map. Also locate nearby towns you might want to visit during the time you plan to be in Japan.

3. LAND AND PEOPLE

Regions: Japan is divided into 47 different administrative units, called prefectures, which are grouped into eight regions: **Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyushu, Ryuku Islands.**

Language: Japanese is the official language of Japan. Its traditional writing system is based upon Chinese ideographs, although the spoken language is not similar to spoken Chinese. There are also two phonetic alphabets used to write Japanese, called **hiragana** and **katakana.**

Population: Of countries which consist of land suitable for agriculture, Japan is the third most densely populated, ranking seventeenth in the world in total population. In 1982, the population of Japan was 118,450,000 with a density of 767 people per square mile. Around 45% of the population lives in three major cities: Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. 78% of the population lives in urban areas.

Ethnic Groups: Japan is 99% homogeneous, with a small number of citizens of Chinese and Korean origin, plus native **Ainu** peoples. More recently, a certain number of Indochinese refugees have been relocated in Japan.

JAPAN
0 50 100 150 miles
0 50 150 kilometers
USSR
HOKKAIDO
CHINA
North
Pacific Ocean
Sea of Japan
NORTH
KOREA
HONSHU
Tokyo
SOUTH
KOREA
Kyoto
Osaka
SHIKOKU
KYUSHU
East China Sea
Philippine Sea
NAMPO SHOTO
RYUKYU ISLANDS
OKINAWA
IWO JIMA

Geography: Japan is located off the east coast of the Asian continent. It consists of four main islands: **Hokkaido**, **Honshu**, **Shikoku** and **Kyushu**, plus an archipelago of more than 3,900 smaller islands. Japan's total area is 381,945 square kilometers (147,470 square miles).

Cities: The capital city of Japan is Tokyo. Other large cities are Osaka, Nagoya, Sapporo, Kyoto, and Yokohama.

Climate: Japan has well-defined changes of seasons. On the Pacific side of the country, summers are usually rainy, while winters have clear periods with dry winds. On the Japan Sea side of the country, the summers are also rainy, while the winters are snowy. The climate around the Seto Inland Sea is warm with a little rain.

4. GOVERNMENT

Japanese government is a parliamentary system based on the English model. It operates according to laws set out in their constitution, written in 1947, and consists of a legislative branch called the Diet, an executive branch responsible to the Diet, and an independent judicial branch.

Legislative power is vested in the Diet, which consists of the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors. The House of Representatives has 511 members, each of whom is elected for a term of four years. The House of Councilors has 252 members, each of whom is elected for a term of six years. The Diet is responsible for activities such as revising the constitution, deciding upon the budget, establishing treaties, and selecting a prime minister.

The executive branch consists of a Cabinet and

the Emperor, who acts as a symbol of the state under the constitution. The Emperor has no governing powers and performs only those activities described in the constitution, such as appointing the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court designated by the Diet and the Cabinet respectively. The Cabinet is made up of the Prime Minister and 20 ministers of state. It is responsible to the Diet. The Prime Minister is also a member of the Diet and has the power to appoint and dismiss ministers of state, who are themselves civilians. The Cabinet's functions include the following: administering laws, managing foreign affairs, administering the civil service, and proposing the budget.

Administration of Japanese laws is accomplished through local government. The country is divided into 47 prefectures, each of which has its own governor and assembly. The governors and assembly members are elected directly by the residents of each prefecture. Local government is responsible for matters relating to land preservation and development, pollution control, disaster prevention, education, social welfare and health.

The ruling political party in Japan is the Liberal Democratic Party. In addition, there are six other major parties: the Japan Socialist Party, the **Komeito** (Clean Government Party), the Democratic Socialist Party, the Japan Communist Party, the New Liberal Club, and the United Social Democratic Party.

5. ECONOMY

Japan does not have many natural resources, and much of its land is not suitable for agriculture. Still, using advanced farming methods and technology, Japan has been able to achieve crop production rates which are among the highest in the world. It is approximately 70% self-sufficient, producing a slight

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surplus of rice. It imports wheat, sorghum and soybeans.

Japan's economy has grown at a very high rate since the 1960's. This is due primarily to an emphasis on innovative technology, an intelligent and industrious work force, and strong private investment in industry. It remains one of the three major industrial complexes in the world, the other two being North America and Western Europe.

6. EDUCATION

Japan has one of the highest literacy rates in the world. Education is highly valued and has been historically, as literacy and higher education have always been emphasized throughout Asia. Japan's high educational standards are in large part responsible for the country's ability to continue advancing its technological development at a rapid rate.

Education is free and compulsory for all children for six years of elementary education and three years of junior high school. Approximately 95% of the students go on to complete three years of high school. Both private and public high schools exist, but tuition must be paid regardless of which type of school one attends.

Examinations are administered at the end of high school to determine whether a student can go on to a four-year university or a two-year junior college. These examinations are difficult; about 65% of the students completing high school are able to enter institutions of higher learning.

Japanese educational standards are high, and students work very hard. The school day is longer than in many other countries, and the school week is five and a half days long. Holiday periods are

short, and homework is assigned from first grade onward.

7. RELIGION

There are two principal religions in Japan: Buddhism and Shintoism. Neither is exclusive, and most Japanese observe rituals from both traditions. Buddhism has approximately 87 million followers, while Shintoism has about 89 million.

Shintoism is a traditional indigenous religion based upon myths, legends, and rituals practiced by early Japanese people. Buddhism is a religion first brought to Asia from India in the sixth century. It is a system emphasizing gentleness, serenity and compassion, and is based upon the teachings of Buddha, who lived twenty-five centuries ago.

Christianity also exists in Japan, although there are only about one million Japanese Christians. They are evenly divided among Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths.

8. ART

Developments in Japanese art are described with reference to specific periods of time.

Nara Period (710-94 A.D.): When Buddhism was introduced to Japan, many architects came from China and introduced new techniques of Buddhist architecture. Sculpture also developed during this period, as images of Buddha were used for objects of worship. It is also believed that Japanese painting as an artform began to develop during this period, when Buddhist monks introduced coloring techniques. Drawings with India ink also first appeared at this time.

Heian Period (794-1185): During this period, Japanese culture began to develop independently of influences from the Asian continent. The capital of the country was moved to Kyoto. As architects designed and built the new capital, creative innovations occurred. Buddhist painting also flourished. In addition, **yamato-e** (Japanese-style painting depicting the life of the aristocracy) and **emaki** (picture scrolls matching pictures to the sequence of events in a story or poem) first appeared during this period.

Kamakura Period (1185-1333): Zen Buddhism, a sect of Buddhism introduced from the Sung Dynasty in China, influenced artistic development during this period, and many Zen temples were built during this time. In the area of sculpture, realistic carvings of people were produced in addition to Buddhist sculpture. In painting, **nise-e** (portraits) developed during this period.

Muromachi Period (1333-1573): During this period, landscape gardening reached its peak of refinement, and many famous gardens still exist today. **Karesansui** gardening also developed. This is a highly symbolic style of gardening where white sand represents water and rocks represent mountains.

Momoyama Period (1573-1603): Western culture was first introduced in Japan during this period, and merchants who had amassed great wealth began to have more influence. The Japanese tea ceremony (see Tea in CUSTOMS AND VALUES) was developed at this time, and **sukiya-zukuri** architecture was created solely for tea ceremony purposes. Ceramics also flourished at this time, fulfilling the need for certain objects in the tea ceremony.

Edo Period (1603-1868): Decorative painting using silver and gold first appeared during this period. In addition, woodblock prints depicting

events in everyday life became popular. In painting, landscapes were first used as subjects.

1868 to Present: Contact with Western art is responsible for a new tradition of Western-style painting, mostly in oils, which exists in addition to traditional Japanese painting styles. Both Japanese and Western styles of sculpture also continue.

Notes

Notes

SOME BOOKS ABOUT JAPAN

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Notes

This booklet is a country supplement to GETTING THE WHOLE PICTURE: A Student's Field Guide To Language Acquisition and Culture Exploration. The supplement is designed as a self-contained treatment of a specific country's social and cultural features. It may be used in conjunction with the Student Field Guide or independently.

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